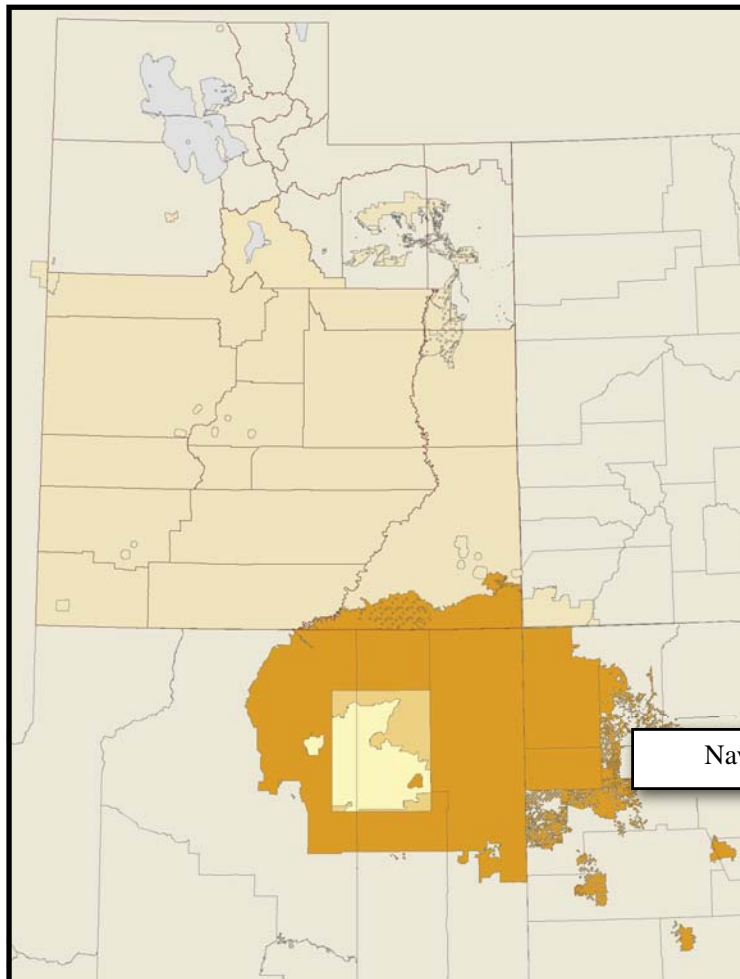


# Navajo Nation Profile

*Prepared for the:*  
**Dixie, Fishlake & Manti-La Sal National Forests**  
**Forest Plan Revision**  
**Social and Economic Assessment**

*Prepared by:*  
**Utah Governor's Office of Planning and Budget**  
*with assistance from:*  
Utah State University College of Natural Resources  
Utah Division of Indian Affairs



Navajo Nation

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**December  
2003**

## NAVAJO NATION—OVERVIEW



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### Governance

The Navajo Nation Council,  
 consisting of 88 members.

### Current Issues

*Education*  
*Sovereignty*  
*Economic development*

Spanning Arizona, New Mexico and Utah, the Navajo Nation covers 17 million acres, or about one-quarter the area of Arizona and constitutes one-third of all Indian lands in the lower 48 states. The traditional Navajo land is encompassed within the Four Sacred Mountains that were created by the Holy People for the Navajos. In the east is 'Sisnaajinii,' --Mt. Blanca; in the south, 'Tsoodzil,' -- Mount Taylor, near Grants, N.M.; in the west 'Dook'o'oosliid,' -- San Francisco Peak, near Flagstaff, Ariz.; and in the north, 'Dibe'Nitsaa,' -- Mt. Hesperus. Navajo Nation lands include beautiful and varied landscapes ranging from arid deserts below 4,000 feet to 10,500-foot high mountain peaks forested with pine, fir and aspen. The land is endowed with significant renewable and non-renewable natural resources, including surface and ground waters, rangelands, prairies and forests, dry and irrigated farmlands, fish and wildlife, plus substantial reserves of coal, oil, natural gas and uranium. The traditional livestock economy of the Navajo people included livestock—sheep, cows and horses— and corn, which is the age-old basic food of Navajo life.

Despite its significant economic potential, socio-economic conditions on the Navajo Nation are comparable to those found in some underdeveloped third world countries, with a majority of Navajo people living below the poverty level and unemployment ranging from 36 percent to over 50 percent seasonally. Many of these conditions are attributed to a lack of infrastructure, which is directly related to the failure of the federal government to meet its trust and treaty obligations. Due to economic conditions, the Navajo Nation is losing population to off-reservation areas. If this trend continues, by 2012 about half of the Navajo people will live outside the Navajo Nation. The population of Utah Dine' is near 7,000 enrolled members.

Education is of utmost importance to the youthful Navajo Nation because about 60 percent of the people are under 25 years of age. Educational statistics for Navajo students indicate poor performance levels, which can be attributed in part to inconsistent and often culturally insensitive curricula. Another large concern is sovereignty. The Navajo Nation is a national leader in this effort to ensure their rights and control over decision making that impacts them.

Above excerpted from: *The Navajo Nation -- an overview*. Press release by Ted Rushton, 520-871-7919  
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